Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 15 September 1891

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LEGENAL COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 15 September, 1891.


The President took the chair at 4 o’clock.

NEW STANDING ORDER.

The President announced that His Excellency the Governor had approved of the new Standing Order adopted by the House on the 1st instant.

AUDITOR-GENERAL’S REPORT.

The President announced the receipt of a letter from the Auditor-General, dated the 10th instant, transmitting the Treasury statements of the receipts and expenditure of the consolidated revenue, the loan, and the several trust funds, for the financial year ended the 30th June, 1891, with his report thereon, together with statements showing the public debt of the colony, and other information in connection with the public accounts.

The Hon. W. H. Wilson moved that the paper be printed.

Question put and passed.

SALE AND USE OF POISONS BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Solicitor General (Hon. T. Byrnes) said: Hon. gentlemen.—A Bill for regulating the sale and use of poisons is no stranger to this House, or, indeed, to the Parliament of Queensland, because I understand that a Bill, perhaps not in the very same terms but with the same object in view, has already passed this House on one occasion, and on two occasions has passed the other House. Those Bills were brought in by private members, but in this case a promise was given by the Government that this measure should be taken up, and it is now taken up with the hope that it will soon become law. There is every reason why we should have a Bill dealing with this subject, not only because of the intrinsic necessity for the measure, but because in most civilised countries belonging to the British Empire there is a measure of this sort on the statute-book. This Bill is not in principle very different from the measure that has been passed in this Chamber before, so that I do not expect there will be any opposition to the Bill as a whole, though I hope there will be many suggestions from hon. members, because the subject is by no means free from difficulty. Though we desire that an effective Bill, wide in its operation, should be passed, yet there are a thousand and one difficulties with regard to almost every clause in the measure; therefore I invite suggestions from hon. gentlemen, so as to make an effective measure as possible under the circumstances.

We cannot hope for a perfect measure, but with the suggestions of hon. gentlemen I have no doubt we shall get a fairly effective measure. There is a schedule to the Bill in which certain poisons are set out. The schedule is by no means a complete list of what are practically poisons, but the 1st schedule contains a list of what are considered poisons within the meaning of this Bill, and that schedule is divided into two parts. The division is important, because in the two cases there is a different degree of liability and a different degree of care attached to the persons who have to deal with them. By clause 5 the substances mentioned in the 1st schedule, “and any other substances that the Governor in Council declares by proclamation to be poisons within the meaning of this Act are in this Act called poisons,” so that the list may by proclamation be extended by the Governor in Council whenever occasion requires. Section 4 is probably the most important section in the Bill, for many reasons. It provides that every person who sells any of the poisons mentioned in the first part of the schedule is bound to keep a poisons sale-book, in which are to be entered, as set out in the section, the name of the poison, the date of sale, the person to whom it was sold, the place of his abode, and his occupation. And the sale is to be witnessed by the signature of the seller, and also by the signature of the purchaser, and in case the purchaser cannot write, by the signature of some person who will undertake to witness the signature. That is a clause which I have no doubt will be passed by this House, because its importance is apparent. I will only point out one particular phase of our social life in which it is all important, and that is with regard to the aid it will give in the detection of crime. When a crime is committed by means of poison, if the person who purchases poison has to sign his name, and if the seller has also to sign his name in his book, the officers of justice will be aided immensely in tracing the source from which the poison has been obtained in cases where the death of an unfortunate victim has been caused. Then there are other advantages...
which I need not dwell upon. I will just mention one thing, however. We know that many persons, in an unfortunate fit of frenzy, or on the impulse of the moment, desire to hurl themselves out of this world. If those persons had to go through a certain form or procedure set out in the Bill before they could procure poison, no doubt their resolution might cool, and if they had a moment in which to reflect on the step which they were about to take, it is possible that many of the suicides which we have to record during the course of the year in Queensland. Under section 5 poisons cannot be sold to any person under the age of eighteen years, or to any person unknown to the vendor unless some credible witness is present who knows the purchaser and can assure the seller of the character of the purchaser. The 6th clause deals with a particular class of cases. It is rendered unlawful to sell poison for destroying vermin, unless the purchaser is a householder, and the reason for that is apparent. In so many instances has self-destruction been caused by the use of poisons which have been purchased ostensibly for the purpose of destroying vermin—"pests and vermin," and other things of that sort—that the legislature ought to take some action. It may be urged that it is somewhat difficult to decide what is a householder, but there is really no necessity for deciding. A householder is the head of the house—he is a person as clearly distinguishable from a lodger—and it can be easily ascertained whether a person is a householder or not. The 7th section deals with the case of arsenic and strychnine, and it is provided that the compounds of those two poisons are to be coloured in order that they may be more readily recognised. Sections 8 and 9 deal with the questions as to who are to be the sellers of poisons. Section 8 provides that no person except a medical practitioner or a pharmaceutical chemist shall sell any poison unless he holds a certificate from the Pharmaceutical Board; and section 9 provides how a certificate is to be obtained. There are two preliminaries necessary, one that a legally qualified medical practitioner is to certify that the applicant is competent, and the other that a police magistrate is to certify that the applicant is a fit and proper person. It is necessary to go into the case of section 8 only a legally qualified medical practitioner, or a pharmaceutical chemist, or a person holding a certificate can sell poisons, and that it will be possible for assistants of a certain standing to be allowed to sell poisons; and that is a matter which the House ought to take into consideration. We know that a good many deals are done by assistants. An assistant of a certain standing is probably as fit as the chemist himself to do that work; and therefore the House will consider whether this privilege of selling poisons should not be extended to assistants of a certain standing. The question is, as to the years of standing the assistant should have. If that privilege is not extended to assistants of a certain standing, the Bill would require in every case the personal presence of the chemist before any medicine containing poison could be dispensed, and that would be a great hindrance. It has been pointed out to me that in many cases standing of so many years' standing should not have the privilege of selling poisons, provided always that the assistant and the chemist himself would be liable for any mistake of a certain standing. I think, perhaps, the best we shall be able to do with regard to poisons used in pharmacy and proprietary medicines containing poisons, is to pass a law saying that poisons of any compound, of which poisons used for other purposes. Perhaps, then, it may be urged that the same remark which is made in the case of patent medicines there is a difficulty. It has been pointed out to me that it will be very easy in proprietary medicine for a person to make up a proprietary medicine containing poison and call it by any name, and dispense it without it being subject to the provisions of the Act. That seems to be so; but one must trust to a considerable extent to the honour of the profession not to evade the Act in that way, and to the sense of the judicial tribunal, before whom offences against the Act will be tried, that they will not allow it to be evaded. We wish to prevent evasion, and we do not wish to prevent the good which we know may be done by the sale of these proprietary medicines. There are many medicines containing poison, like chlorodyne, for instance, which is sold largely throughout the bush, and is a very good medicine. One does not wish to bring them under the stringent provisions of the Act; and although in our desire to enable medicines of that sort to be sent into the bush without the rigid supervision this Bill requires, we may open the door to a certain extent to evasion, I do not see how that risk is to be avoided. It may be urged that the same remark which is made in the case of the sale of photographic materials. I believe potent poisons are used in the process of photography; but photography has become such a widespread art that it would be an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject to restrict the sale of the materials used in photography to the provisions attached to the sale of poisons used for other purposes. Perhaps, then, it may be urged that the same remark which is made in the case of patent medicines should be applied to the sale of photographic materials. In section 14 of the Act there are enumerated various offences against the Act. Section 15 provides for the recovery of penalties; and under section 16 power of inspecting the "poisons sales book" is given to the officers of police and persons authorised by the Pharmaceutical Board should have power of inspection—the officers of police for the administration of justice; and the Pharmaceutical Board to see that the Act is effectively
worked. Section 17 contains nothing new. The first part is practically a repetition of what is already in the Licensing Act—namely, that the delivery of poisons to a servant shall be 

\[ prind faute \] evidence of the sale; and the second part is intended to facilitate the administration of justice. When a person is charged with not being the holder of a certificate, the onus rests on the defendant of proving that he is. It is much easier for the defendant to prove that he is, than for the prosecution to prove that he is not, because the onus of proof is on the defendant to prove his certificate if he has one; but if the burden of proving a negative were placed on the prosecution I do not know how much evidence would be required to establish the fact. Clause 18 gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations; and clause 19 gives the Governor in Council power to cancel the certificate held by any person as a dealer in poisons on certain grounds.

A person might be a fit and proper person to hold a certificate at one time, but afterwards by reason of intemperance or otherwise it might be necessary that his certificate should be cancelled.

I think that if we pass this measure we shall at least have done something towards regulating the sale of poisons. As I said before this Bill, or any Bill dealing with the subject, cannot be made absolutely effective for all purposes, but it will be a step in the right direction. I am in fact maintaining that present sales books shall be kept, and providing that the entries of sales of poisons shall be certified by sellers and purchasers, a great deal of good will be done, not only in the way of diminishing self-destruction, but also in assisting to prevent criminals escaping from justice. For the reasons I have mentioned I think the Bill will commend itself to hon. members; and as it has passed this House before I think there will be no difficulty in passing it through this Chamber again. It has already passed the other House in two occasions, and with the suggestions such as the lapse of time may have brought to hon. gentlemen, I think this Bill will be very likely to pass this House again. I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The Hon. P. MACPHERSON said: Hon. gentlemen,—I have very much pleasure indeed in supporting this Bill. I am glad to see that at last some steps are to be taken in this way, and that Queensland will no longer stand alone in being without legislation upon this important subject. The Solicitor-General has given us very good and sufficient reasons why a measure of this sort should be passed. As far back as 1888 I introduced a somewhat similar measure into this House, which met with approval, but owing to the course of business in the Assembly it did not become law. The Bill was reintroduced in the Assembly last year, but for some reason or other it did not reach us. So much interest do I take in the subject, that I shall be glad if hon. members will make suggestions in regard to the measure presented to us. I should like very much myself, if it were practicable, to introduce some definition as to what constitutes a wholesale dealer of poisons under the Act. I have endeavoured over and over again to arrive in my own mind, at some satisfactory solution, but I have failed to do so. Possibly some hon. member, whose mind is more ingenious than my own, may direct me to have the matter disposed of. I notice, also, there is no provision made in the Bill to allow a squatter, for instance, in the country, to deal direct with a wholesale dealer on his own premises, and I have many parts of the Bill which invite discussion. But I believe that, so far as the principle is concerned, it is our desire, at all events, to place legislation upon this important subject upon a proper footing. I think, if the passing of this Bill is the means of saving one life, our labours here as a Legislative Council will not have been in vain.
persons purchasing it in a quantity dangerous to life may be identified afterwards, and not be able to get away with his shop, but poison, and perhaps go away and poison themselves or somebody else. I think hon. gentlemen will understand what are my objections to the Bill, and at the same time not look upon it as being useless, or omitted in certain directions.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—The Solicitor-General in moving the second reading of this Bill introduced in a very modest way, especially so when he intimated that he desired to obtain suggestions from hon. gentlemen in order to make the Bill as perfect as can be. It is quite evident that he fully realises the difficulty that surrounds the establishment of a law relating to poisons satisfactory to all parts of the colony. It is a very difficult undertaking, and one which will not be altogether met by the Bill before us now. I may mention one subject in regard to which I think an omission is made. If there is any one cause of the destruction of human life in this colony more than another, it is the supply of opium to aboriginals, and I think no Poisons Bill in this colony will be worthy of the community unless it contains the necessary legislation to protect people who are unable to protect themselves against the use of poisons. That is one of the most important difficulties, and it should meet with special attention from the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill and other hon. members of the House. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the greatest part of our aboriginal population is being destroyed, day after day, by opium being supplied to them. We have laws prohibiting the supply of intoxicating liquors to blacks or savages, and I consider we should have the same, if not more stringent, in regard to the sale of opium, which is ten times worse. It also ought to be made a criminal offence to supply opium to young people under a certain age; and what the result of supplying it may be I leave to medical gentlemen to say. We have opium dens here, and the sale of opium ought to be strictly prohibited. Any person who takes opium is irremediably lost, and we are day by day losing the good qualities of too many people who have developed opium habits. I trust the Bill will be fully considered. In regard to the Bill itself, I have not many criticisms to offer; but I would point out one element in regard to clause 9, which has been a matter of difficulty, and that is, that the clause will give a monopoly of the sale of all sorts of poisons in distant places. The local chemist can charge what price he likes; he will have a complete monopoly of the sale of medicines in the district, and there is no protection to the people in these sparsely populated districts against a monopoly of that kind. Hon. members living in the country have wisely hesitated to commit the people they represent to what may become a severe means of extortion, and I do not wonder at it. I have nothing further to add, beyond saying that I think the suggestion made by the Hon. Mr. Macpherson, as to the advisability of including some definition of the words "wholesale chemist," should be seriously considered.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am sure I am very glad indeed to see a Bill of this nature brought forward by the Solicitor-General, because the fact of the Government having taken the matter in hand at last will become law in some form or other. I do not think any hon. gentleman can doubt the necessity for the Bill. I was not in the House when the Solicitor-General spoke, so I do not know what facts he may have brought forward in support of it, but I am in a position to show how a Bill, if properly introduced a few years ago there would have been many deaths prevented—accidental and intentional. Cases have come under my own observation of poisoning by Bill, which certainly would not have taken place had this Bill been in force. I draw conclusions also from the fact that in the other colonies where measures similar to this have been in force, deaths by accident and by suicide have been proportionately very much less than in this colony. In fact, when I first received the information which I will give this House, I was quite startled at the difference which exists between the mortality from these causes in this and in the other colonies. I hardly conceived it possible that the presence of a Bill, no matter how stringently administered, could effect such a marked difference as I will be able to show. The deaths by poison in Victoria in the year 1886, for a population of 887,004, were 34 by accident and 13 from suicide. In New South Wales in the same year, with a population of 797,940, the deaths by poison were 12 accidental and 20 suicidal, or a total of 32. In Queensland in the same year, with a population of 332,016, there were 19 deaths from accident and 7 from suicide, making a total of 26. I will not go through the figures for each year, but I will show you the differences in the various colonies and read the totals for four years. The ratio per 1,000 of the population of accidental deaths by poisoning in 1886 was '013 in Victoria, '012 in New South Wales, and '059 in Queensland. The ratio of deaths by suicide in the same year was '012 in Victoria, '020 in New South Wales, and '021 in Queensland. The total number of deaths due to both causes, suicide and accident, being '037 in Victoria, '039 in New South Wales, and '078 in Queensland. In the year 1887, the total was '053 from both causes in Victoria, '043 in New South Wales, and '064 in Queensland. In the year 1888, in Victoria, the number was '058, in New South Wales, '056, and in Queensland, '083. In the year 1889 the numbers were, '046 in Victoria, '045 in New South Wales, and '083 in Queensland. The ratio for the four years, 1886-1889, inclusive, from both causes was—Victoria '026, New South Wales '021, and Queensland '037. The proportion due to suicides was—Victoria '028, New South Wales '021, and Queensland '027; and that from accident or negligence was—Victoria '015, New South Wales '051, and Queensland '045. In other words, the deaths were in the proportion of 5 for Victoria, 7 for New South Wales, and 15 for Queensland. Those are startling facts. The number of deaths from poisoning in Queensland has been in four years three times as great as in Victoria, and twice as great as in New South Wales. Those figures speak for themselves, and show the urgent necessity that exists for a Bill of this nature. I may remark that possibly the reason why there were fewer deaths in Victoria than in New South Wales is, that in the latter colony there is an exception in favour of some preparations of opium, and that, in my opinion, accounts for the slight difference there is between the two. I have looked through this Bill very carefully, and I really do not see anything one can seriously object to in it. Of course, as the Solicitor-General has pointed out, it is a difficult matter to make a Bill comprehensive as to prevent any accident or suicide by the use of poisons; but I may say that clause 13, dealing with excepting poisons from the definition of medicines, is an exception in favour of some preparations of opium, and that, in my opinion, accounts for the slight difference there is between the two.
matter of revenue or otherwise from the sale of these medicines, and I think the proprietors receive a considerable benefit. I do not see why professional medical men should not take advantage of it.

In point of fact, Queensland is a regular dumping-ground for all of them. I am informed by the manager of one of the leading wholesale druggists' houses in Brisbane, that the patient for a medicine that has taken a very prominent place in the last ‘Intoxicated’ and in some newspapers, told him that Queensland and New South Wales are the best places in the world for the sale of patent medicines. In England the sale is comparatively limited, and also in Victoria, because the tariff in the latter country is so high that they are practically excluded from the market, and if they wish to sell their medicines they have to start factories there. I only wish the tariff here was sufficiently high to bring about a similar state of affairs. Where you find one medicine that is of real use, such as chlorodyne, you find a great many that are very injurious, and ought not to be sold under any pretence whatever. A lot of these proprietary medicines are poisons, just as much so as opium, because neither of them contain opium. Chlorodyne owes its virtues to the morphia which it contains, and certainly some care ought to be exercised in the sale or chlorodyne. I am not in a position to state how positively and accurately any deaths having occurred from the careless or intentional use of it, but I know that it is largely used by bushmen to pull themselves together after a spree through the bush, they have known them down their cheque at a public-house, and they are in such a condition that the publican generously gives them a good dose of chlorodyne, which probably swells them up to sleep for two or three hours, or possibly sends them off to sleep altogether, for all we know. But at any rate they have a sleep, and recover to some extent. Now, some limit ought to be put to this, and I do not see why chlorodyne should not be included amongst the preparations of opium, and the same care that is necessary in the sale of opium or laudanum should be exercised in my opinion, in connection with that of chlorodyne. Then, again, we have a number of these medicines supposed to be useful to children teething. We have a large number of small infants mortality in this country, and no doubt a great deal of that is owing to these medicines. Medical men are constantly being called in, and finding infants in a state of symptoms which compels them to prescribe for them, probably for a great deal, I can say, that when used with discretion and moderation they often afford relief which could not otherwise be obtained. Therefore I think it would be unwise to make such restrictions as would have the effect of preventing people from using those remedies, though they may not be quite so desirable as might be wished. I am not speaking of the abuse of those medicines; I am speaking of their use in places where it is difficult to obtain medical advice. With regard to the sale of opium, I think it would be a good thing if the Solicitor-General could see his way to introduce a special clause into the Bill subjecting any particular drug to strict supervision. It is bad enough to supply it to aborigines, but we know that it is also used by white people, and supplied to even young people, to their great injury, and to the injury of the community. I think it would be desirable to prevent that drug from being used except in connection with medical prescriptions, or at any rate, under medical direction. A medical direction of it is obtained by people in the bush through the post from dealers in the towns on the coast. It is not largely held by people in business in the bush, except possibly by Chinamen, and they get their supplies through the post in registered parcels, so that it would be easy to deal with it in that direction, because that would be subject to restriction in carriage. With regard to strychnine, which is largely used in connection with pastoral pursuits for keeping down native beasts and other vermin, I may say that it is necessary that sufficient supplies should be allowed to be held in localities where it may be required for use. It is undesirable that the sale of some of those poisons should be restricted in the manner proposed in clause 9, because in some places in the bush they may not be obtainable, and there might not be a licensed chemist within 50, or 100, or 150 miles of where they are wanted, and if they could be obtained their uselessness would be very much diminished. I think that with the amendments that have been suggested, and others that may be suggested in committee, the Bill may be made a very useful measure.

Question put and passed; and the committee of the Bill made an Order of the Day for tommorrow.
POST AND TELEGRAPH BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On this Order of the Day being read, the President left the chair, and the House went into committee to further consider the Bill.

On clause 21, as follows, the clause, as contained within the following description shall, for the purposes of this Act, be deemed a supplement to a newspaper and may be transmitted with the word “supplement” to—

"A copy of the daily or weekly issue of the parliamentary debates published by the authority of Parliament, or any publication containing wholly or in substantial part of matter like that of a newspaper, or of advertisements printed on a sheet or sheets, or consisting wholly or in part of engravings, prints, or lithographs illustrative of articles in the newspaper, or of literary matter, the same being printed in Queensland, from type set up in Queensland, or from stereotype plates made therin, and having the printer's name thereon, and further having the title and date of publication of the newspaper printed at the top of every page of the supplement, or at the top of every sheet or afon in which the engraving, print, or lithograph is placed," the word “matter” in the 13th line.

The Hon. W. H. WILSON said that before proceeding to the discussion of the amendment, he wished to make a statement in further explanation of the error he hoped to fall into when the Bill was previously before the Committee. He thought he had some ground for the statement he then made, and on referring at the notes he had used in connection with the subject on the second reading of the Bill he found one to this effect—

"Newspaper proprietors are in the habit of sending parcels of newspapers up the country 'on approval.' If these a e not sold, they are reposted and forwarded back free of charge. The Post Office are carrying, gratuitously, large packets of newspapers backwards and forwards for the convenience and profit of newspaper proprietors and newsagents. They are sent wholesale because there is no postage charged on them."

That was the case he had; but in speaking hurriedly on the matter he used the word "supplement." The Committee were then discussing supplements, and that was probably why he had used that word. He might go further and show that he was not allowed to deliver by the place; but for some time past newspapers had been importing so-called "supplements" for their papers; that they had been paying a price for them in Victoria, and that they had sent them to Queensland, where the Post Office authorities were called upon, in addition to the injury that was inflicted on Queensland artisans, to convey those supplements free of charge throughout the colony. Hon. gentlemen would now see how it was that he fell into the error of using the word.

The Hon. Sir A. H. PALMER: What is the true statement of the case?

The Hon. W. H. WILSON said the true statement of the case was that newspapers were forwarded at the present time without any charge for postage on those newspapers which contained the legislation of the Government, the newsagents had been speaking about. Of course it became a serious matter, because the Post Office distributed last year 8,936,406 newspapers, 7,683,312 of which were contained with free of charge. The newspapers might be estimated to weigh about 862 tons, all of which were at present carried free of charge by the Post Office. It was that state of things which the Government wanted to remedy. Hon. gentlemen knew that the Post Office had to transmit those newspapers 6,401 miles by coach, and 10,061 miles by horse. That showed that the department was unduly handicapped by reason of the weight of mail matter. With regard to the amendment which the Hon. Mr. Gregory had moved—

The Hon. Sir A. H. PALMER said he would ask the hon. member to excuse him for a moment. He understood the hon. gentleman to say that the supplements were sent free of charge and returned free of charge. If that was the case he wanted to know what right had the Post Office to the opportunity to send those supplements at all. They arrived in the colony free from other countries, but they were not newspapers, and he wished to know why they were allowed to go free through the Post Office. Another thing he wished to know was whether they paid duty as paper on coming into the colony?

The Hon. W. H. WILSON said the Post Office only sent them free when enclosed in Queensland newspapers. The supplements themselves were admitted absolutely free of all duty to the colony, whereas on blank paper there was an ad. valent duty of 5 per cent. On books and matters of that kind there was a duty of 15 per cent. The Committee were now dealing with the clause defining supplements, and the Government wanted to restrict the letterpress of that word "supplement" to certain things. They allowed in that definition Hansard to be enclosed in a newspaper free, they allowed any supplements which were referred to in newspapers and other matters that were referred to in newspapers, and they allowed literary matter that was printed in Queensland from type set up in Queensland, or from stereotype plates, but they did not consider those supplements. But they objected to allowing supplements printed wholesale in the other colonies, which came into Queensland free of duty, to be distributed through the Post Office at the public expense. As far as the supplements themselves were concerned, if the parties chose to send them and distribute them outside the Post Office, the Government would not object. All they objected to was supplements being distributed by the Post Office free.

The Hon. Sir A. H. PALMER said the remarks the hon. gentleman had made were not an answer to his question. He wanted some information about the whole. Those papers from abroad or from the other colonies could not be supplements until they were published with the papers issued by the other party, they were all addressed, and he wished to know whether the Post Office authorities had been in the habit of sending those supplements to the country newspaper free of cost, and, if so, by what authority?

The Hon. W. H. WILSON: No.

The Hon. W. BROOKES said he could not say that the Hon. Mr. Wilson had thrown any light on the matter. So far as supplements were concerned, the practice was to send them in bundles of various weights, from 1 lb. to 1 cwt. Those bundles went by railway as parcels, and those parcels only disclosed their contents to be supplements when they reached the newspaper offices to which they were addressed. The expense of circulating them, when enclosed in one each paper, could surely not be very great, because those country newspapers had very little more than a local circulation. Takes the Border Post, for instance. He might say here that, in the picture he drew the other night with regard to the scarcity of literary matter in a large part of the colony, he was not including in his view those parts of the colony occupied by large station-holders, who could afford to pay anything. He had in his mind such districts as Stanthorpe, from which he received the letter he read
on that occasion. The Border Post did not circulate among a lot of rich persons. It was published in a farming district, in which the people were all more or less poor. He had another letter from the editor of the Border Post, who wrote to this effect touching the matter on which the Hon. Mr. Wilson had just spoken—

"It has been represented to us that an important proposition had been made for the purpose of getting the supplements from the South. That is a perfect myth. That proposition would not afford employment for more people. It would provide the supply schools of arts with three copies of the miserable local newspaper, and that he supplied seven numbers of present colonists and their insignificant, but the postage on them would be insignificant, but the postage on them would be.

He said the total number of exchanges was three or five.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said: How?

The Hon. W. BROOKES said he would admit that there was some difficulty in explaining the reason at once, but surely there was some explanation. If the proprietors had to pay an extra price for their supplements, as they would have to do if the clause became law as it stood, that would diminish the funds which they had available for the employment of wages men, and to that extent, at all events, the daily bread of those working men would be taken away.

The Hon. W. F. TAYLOR said that although there was a tax on paper, supplements came into the colony free of duty; and he could not imagine that printed paper sheets come in free while a blank paper should be taxed. Seeing that supplements came into the colony free, the Post Office ought not to be asked to carry them for nothing. The Hon. Mr. Brookes just now made a strong point about bread being taken out of people's mouths. It appeared that if the supplements were printed in the colony, it would be a means of putting bread into four or five more mouths at any rate, and how it was to take bread out of other people's mouths he did not know. The people who read the supplements did not eat them, and it would not affect them at any rate. He did not see how it would affect the country newspapers very much either, and a country newspaper which could not exist without the miserable supplements that were imported, ought not to exist at all. A great many little papers existed for the sole purpose of providing a living for the proprietors, or creating discord in the district, and no harm would be done if they went out of existence.

The Hon. W. FORREST said the Hon. Mr. Brookes had complained that the explanation given by the Hon. Mr. Wilson was altogether wrong. He did not see how it would affect the supplement of</p>
The Hon. W. H. WILSON said they could not register a foreign newspaper in Queensland, and he did not think that the definition was very clear. It appeared to him that the definition was that the words “the same being printed” might be applied to engravings, or prints, or lithographs, or anything that could be applied to the letterpress. That was the only matter that was capable of being printed in Queensland.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY said he might be permitted to explain a technical matter. The Solicitor-General did not seem to be aware of the fact that the whole of the Graphic pictures, drawings, and everything else, were printed from stereotype plates; that was an actual fact. The Queensland Punch, for a long time, and part of the Boomerang, were from type set up and then printed by lithography. He mentioned that because it was a technical matter which he did not expect the Solicitor-General generally to have much acquaintance with. They had to be very careful in referring to those points, because if a case went into court they would have to prove whether the words and persons in question with the technicalities brought forward as witnesses with a view of explaining what was intended by the Bill. He did not wish to oppose the Bill, but it was such a shape that it would carry out the intentions of the Government.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said there was one question at the very threshold of the matter that required to be answered. If the Solicitor-General referred to the commencement of clause 20 they would see the word “publication” was used, and also in clause 21. He had read very closely through the Bill, but there was nothing he could see which provided how they could make two publications out of one newspaper. They sent through the Post Office a parcel of printed matter, one part printed in Queensland and the other printed possibly in San Francisco, and it was addressed as one newspaper. Those two clauses proposed to make that one newspaper two publications. He did not know how the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill could solve the practical difficulty which he saw there. Then there was another he would point out again, and that was that they had no definition in the Bill. He admitted that that was an interpolation, the object being to have those supplements printed in Queensland from type set up in Queensland, or from stereotype plates made therefrom. He admitted that that was an interpolation, the object being to have those supplements printed in the colony. The Hon. Mr. Brookes said that newspaper proprietors appeared to think they would be injured if those supplements were printed out of the colony. He happened to hold in his hand a letter received a couple of days ago by the Postmaster-General from the Northern Miner, a paper very well known, and it was to this effect:

“As consistent supporters of your Post and Telegraph Bill we are pleased to be able to congratulate you on carrying it through. The enclosed letter shows that you were correct in your anticipations that the prohibition of foreign supplements would lead to their being printed in Queensland. In our opinion such supplements are an abomination, and the money would be better spent by local journals in giving local news. These supplements are supported by advertisements which would otherwise go to the papers themselves. This is an argument which was not used—least of all did not observe by our journals, newspaper proprietors have different views thereon.”

They knew that from the letter read by the Hon. Mr. Brookes and the letter that he had received from the Northern Miner that the letter of the supplements being supported by advertisements was very important to the local papers themselves. As the writer of this letter said, those supplements were

such matter as was to be printed should be printed in Queensland, and that clause, to his mind, did not state that. The Hon. W. H. WILSON said there was one question at the very threshold of the matter that required to be answered. If the Solicitor-General referred to the commencement of clause 20 they would see the word “publication” was used, and also in clause 21. He had read very closely through the Bill, but there was nothing he could see which provided how they could make two publications out of one newspaper. They sent through the Post Office a parcel of printed matter, one part printed in Queensland and the other printed possibly in San Francisco, and it was addressed as one newspaper. Those two clauses proposed to make that one newspaper two publications. He did not know how the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill could solve the practical difficulty which he saw there. Then there was another he would point out again, and that was that they had no definition in the Bill. He admitted that that was an interpolation, the object being to have those supplements printed in Queensland from type set up in Queensland, or from stereotype plates made therefrom. He admitted that that was an interpolation, the object being to have those supplements printed in the colony. The Hon. Mr. Brookes said that newspaper proprietors appeared to think they would be injured if those supplements were printed out of the colony. He happened to hold in his hand a letter received a couple of days ago by the Postmaster-General from the Northern Miner, a paper very well known, and it was to this effect:

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largely supported by those advertisements, and there were also Sydney and Melbourne advertisements. That was one reason why supplements were printed and published in Brisbane, the firms who would print them would certainly cast about to obtain advertisements, and it would be very much to their benefit. In the Northern Miner of 4th September he observed this paragraph:—

"The clause which virtually prohibits the posting of foreign printed supplements in Queensland newspapers introduced into the Post and Telegraph Bill by Mr. Binnack is having the effect he anticipated. In last mail we received a letter from a printing firm in Melbourne stating that in order to continue their supplement service after the end of the present year they intend to open a printing office in Brisbane."

Now, that was not a new matter. He did not wish gentlemen to think it was one that suddenly struck the Government, because at the intercolonial conference which he had attended in 1888, that matter was brought up by the Postmaster-General of Victoria in a paper submitted to the conference, in which he stated—

"We also think that nothing should be accepted as a supplement to a newspaper unless printed and published in the same colony as a newspaper and that no stitched or unstitched enclosure shall be regarded as a supplement to a newspaper."

That gentleman had brought that forward, and it was discussed, and the result of that discussion and the different conferences held since then had been that they had come to the conclusion he had stated. Then he held in his hand a Bill prepared in the year 1888, and which had been revised by him in 1888 after the conference, and that Bill contained a clause which stated—

"The following shall be deemed, for the purposes of this Act, a supplement to a newspaper, that is to say—

a supplement printed and published in Queensland, consisting wholly or in great part, etc., etc.

Then it ran on as in the clause before them, and that showed what at that time it was contemplated to propose to Parliament that those supplements should be printed in Queensland in the same way as the newspaper. If printing offices were established in Brisbane for this purpose, it would be an advantage to the newspaper proprietors as well as the Postal authorities.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said he had no doubt the Hon. Mr. Wilson had given the subject a good deal of consideration, but he was satisfied he had not appreciated what would be the effect upon the Bill of the introduction of those words. He had pointed out the other day that the Bill contained no definition of the word "newspaper," which would be applicable to papers printed outside the colony. The hon. gentleman himself had been driven to refer to the proceedings of the Intercolonial Conference to give them a definition.

The SOLICITOR-GENERAL: It was a subject for the convention, what was to be considered a newspaper.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said he was pointing out that there was no definition of the word "newspaper." Of course, the suggestion of the Solicitor-General might lead to some further investigation on the subject. There was one subject the Hon. Mr. Wilson did not grapple with, and that was how to make two publications out of one, and hold in his hand a supplement the face of which was printed out of the colony and the back within the colony. Was that a Queensland publication, or was it the class of supplement to be prohibited? He thought the hon. gentleman had better give a little more consideration to the subject, and postpone the clause.